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Muslim welder's shop set on fire in Kaithal

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KAITHAL: Two days after some miscreants set a Muslim welder's shop on fire in Kaithal district's Keorak village -- adopted by Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar as part of the Vidhayak Adarsh Gram Yojana -- Kaithal superintendent of police (SP) Shashank Kumar Sawan, sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Kamal Preet Kaur and other officials visited the village on Friday and assured the Muslim community of their safety and prompt action against the culprits.

The SP said the miscreants had set the shop on fire after the victims refused to remove their skullcaps and shave their beards.

Talking to TOI, the 55-year-old Keorak shopkeeper said, "It all started 5 days back when my son liked a Facebook post of a Muslim religious leader of Delhi. However, we apologized before the panchayat for this. After that some unknown persons pelted stones our house with stones and told us to leave the village. We decided to send our son away once the lockdown ended, but the two accused, Rohtas (34) and Sharvan (34) along with their accomplices set our welding shop on fire on April 8. A cot and two chairs were burned before we doused the flames with the help of a neighbour."

Gayur said, "We have been living in village for 55 years and have never seen such an incident. This has instilled fear among the 10-12 Muslim families in the village."

The Kaithal SP said, "When we came to know about the incident, a first information report (FIR) was registered against the accused under sections 295A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its region or religious belief), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the IPC and 51 of the Disaster Management Act 2005. Those behind the incident will be arrested soon."